

## *Democrats urge Senate to oppose Trump's pick for antisemitism envoy ahead of confirmation hearing*

*House Democrats cite JTA's reporting in a new letter opposing Kaploun's nomination.*

*By [Asaf Elia-Shalev](#) November 18, 2025*



*Donald Trump and Yehuda Kaploun light a candle during an Oct. 7 remembrance event at the Trump National Doral Golf Club in Doral, Florida on Oct. 07, 2024. (Joe Raedle/Getty Images)*

*On the eve of a long-delayed Senate confirmation hearing for President Donald Trump's pick for antisemitism envoy, a group of House Democrats is urging senators to reject the nomination of Rabbi Yehuda Kaploun, arguing that he lacks the judgment and moral authority the post requires.*

*In a [letter obtained by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency](#) and sent Tuesday to Sen. Jim Risch, the Idaho Republican who chairs the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and Sen. Jeanne Shaheen, its top Democrat, the lawmakers call Kaploun's nomination "partisan and*

*controversial” and say his “comments and actions demonstrate a clear unfitness for this post.”*

*A total of 18 House Democrats signed the letter, including several Jewish lawmakers such as Jerrold Nadler, Jamie Raskin, Jan Schakowsky, Becca Balint and Steve Cohen.*

*The intervention is atypical: House members almost never publicly oppose sub-cabinet nominees, a category generally considered routine Senate business.*

*The committee is scheduled to hold a hearing on Kaploun’s nomination on Wednesday morning.*

*Trump tapped Kaploun in April to serve as the State Department’s Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Antisemitism, an ambassador-level role focused on antisemitism abroad. The Senate [did not move for months to schedule a hearing](#), leaving the position vacant even as administration officials warned about a spike in antisemitism.*

*Kaploun, a Hasidic rabbi, Miami-based businessman and longtime political operative close to Trump, would be the first Hasidic Jew to serve in the role if confirmed. In a May profile, [JTA detailed how he rose](#) from a Brooklyn yeshiva student and community activist affiliated with the Chabad movement to a prominent figure in Republican politics and a visible surrogate in Trump’s 2024 campaign.*

*The Democratic letter focuses first on Kaploun’s rhetoric about Trump’s political opponents. It cites a comment in which Kaploun said that after the Hamas attacks of Oct. 7, “Democrats refuse to even recognize the butchers of women and kidnappers of children as terrorists,” calling the statement “absurd, insulting, and malicious.” The lawmakers argue that the remark maligns Democratic members of the Foreign Relations Committee who condemned the attacks and raises questions about his ability to work across party lines.*

*In addition, the Democrats point to an event Kaploun organized during the 2024 campaign at which Trump said that if he were to lose the election, “[the Jewish people would have a lot to do with a loss](#),” and spoke of a “Democrat curse” on Jews who vote for the party. The letter describes those remarks as antisemitic scapegoating and says Kaploun’s failure to publicly condemn them — or what the letter calls the administration’s hiring of “antisemites and Christian Nationalists” — should be a central topic of Wednesday’s hearing.*

*The lawmakers [also cite JTA’s earlier reporting](#) on dueling lawsuits in Miami-Dade County involving Kaploun and another member of his synagogue, which alleged threats and an extramarital affair. Court records show that judges issued restraining orders on both sides and that the case was settled in April, days before Trump announced the nomination.*

*Kaploun has denied having an affair and has said, through an attorney, that he was drawn into a marital dispute that has now been resolved.*

*The letter closes by turning Kaploun's own past standard for nominees back on him, quoting a 1993 submission he made to the Senate, in which he argued that nominees must be judged on "honor," "fidelity to principle" and respect for civil rights. "By his own standards, Mr. Kaploun fails," the lawmakers write, urging senators to vote no.*

*Their intervention comes as a broad coalition of Jewish organizations has pressed the Senate to move quickly to confirm an antisemitism envoy and a parallel ambassador-at-large for international religious freedom. In [an August letter led by the Jewish Federations of North America](#), groups from across the Jewish communal spectrum urged Senate leaders to "swiftly" fill both roles, warning that "we dare not delay in filling these critical positions."*

*Kaploun has previously said he is refraining from interviews until after his confirmation process, but he has publicly argued for the importance of rising above partisanship. In [a May op-ed published by JTA](#) and co-authored with the previous two antisemitism envoys, Elan Carr and Deborah Lipstadt, Kaploun wrote that "the fight against this terrible scourge... must be bipartisan and non-political."*